Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the abstract, beginning at page 29, with the following rewritten abstract.

~~The present disclosure concerns embodiments~~ Embodiments of a retaining wall system that combines unitary block structures and block structures having multiple interlocking subcomponents. The retaining wall system is used to construct hybrid retaining walls having one or more courses constructed from the unitary block structures and one or more different courses constructed from the block structures of interlocking subcomponents.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 14, with the following rewritten paragraph:

FIG. 10 is a cross-sectional view of another embodiment of a hybrid retaining wall comprising six lower courses of unitary blocks and six upper courses of block assemblies, with tie-back sheets between some of the ~~upper~~ lower courses.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 9, with the following rewritten paragraph:

To increase the stability of courses constructed from blocks 60, tie-back sheets typically are disposed between one or more adjacent courses of such blocks and extended rearwardly into the backfill material retained behind the wall. Course of blocks 60 stabilized with such tie-back sheets typically can be backfilled with less expensive backfill materials than are used to backfill courses constructed from block assemblies 10. For example, silts or clays can be used to backfill most walls constructed from blocks 60, whereas higher quality backfill materials, such sands or gravels, may be required when constructing walls from block assemblies 10. Thus, it is generally more economical to use blocks 60 for constructing a wall where extensive backfilling is required to fill a void between a native embankment and the wall under construction. On the other hand, since block assemblies 10 do not require the use of tie-back sheets to stabilize a wall,

courses that are made from block assemblies 10 generally require less excavation than courses that are made from unitary blocks 60. Thus, to facilitate wall construction and to reduce material costs, it would be desirable to construct one or more lower courses of a wall from block assemblies 10, and then construct one or more upper courses from blocks 60 where minimal or no excavation of the native embankment is required.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 7, line 11, with the following rewritten paragraph:

In the illustrated embodiment, courses 102a-102f of block assemblies 10 extend from the base of the wall to approximately the height of the native embankment 104. Courses 102g-102l of blocks 60 are positioned above courses 102a-102f and form the portion of the wall above the height of the native embankment 104. Tie-back sheets 108 are positioned between courses 102g and 102h, courses 102i and 102j, and courses 102k and 102l, and extend rearwardly into the backfill material ~~110~~ 112 retained behind the wall 100. The number of tie-back sheets 108 used in the wall can vary and primarily depends on the overall height and length (horizontal distance) of the wall. As illustrated in FIG. 9, the use of block assemblies 10 in courses 102a-102f minimizes excavation during construction of the wall 100 because it is not necessary to excavate the native embankment 104 for placement of tie-back sheets in these courses.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 8, line 9, with the following rewritten paragraph:

FIG. 10 illustrates another embodiment of a hybrid retaining wall, indicated generally at 200, constructed in front of a native embankment ~~210~~ 206. Retaining wall 200 includes lower courses 202a, 202b, 202c, 202d, 202e, 202f constructed from blocks 60 and upper courses 202g, 202h, 202i, 202j, 202k, and 202l constructed from block assemblies 10. A course 202m of capping blocks 106 can be constructed on top of the uppermost course 202l of block assemblies

10 to finish the wall. Tie-back sheets 108 are used to stabilize courses 202a-202f of blocks 60.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 9, line 17, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Referring now to FIG. 1, the construction of the block assemblies 10 will be described. Each block assembly in the illustrated configuration typically includes at least three interlocked, vertically oriented planar blocks. Additional blocks can be added to ~~a~~ an assembly to increase the depth of the assembly, as further described below. As shown in FIG. 1, a veneer or face block 12 (also referred to herein as a front block) has a face or front surface 14 that is exposed in the front surface of a wall. The front surface 14 desirably has textured or broken face resembling natural stone. An elongated trunk block 16 is attached to the rear of the face block 12 at a vertical medial junction thereon. The trunk block 16 extends perpendicularly from the face block 12 in the rearward direction. A tail block 18 (also referred to herein as an anchor block) is attached to the rearward end of the trunk block 16 so that it is parallel to the face block 12, with the trunk block being attached to the tail block at a vertical medial junction.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 12, line 18, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The tongues 20 and grooves 22 are all similarly tapered along their vertical lengths so that each dovetail joint is secured against excess motion and slippage by the respective tongue 20 being wedged into the respective groove 22. In a maximum material condition (i.e., when the spaces between adjacent block assemblies are completely filled with a fill material (e.g., gravel)), the trunk block 16 may ride slightly above a flush alignment with the adjoining blocks. In a minimum material condition (i.e., when the spaces between adjacent block assemblies are less than completely filled), the end surface 24 of a groove 22 and the sloped end 30 of a corresponding tongue ~~50~~ 20 will abut to prevent the trunk block from being excessively below an aligned level.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 13, line 13, with the following rewritten paragraph:

The pockets 28 are configured to receive block-connecting elements 50 to interconnect the face block 12 with two face blocks of an overlaying course. As best shown in FIG. 8, each block-connecting element 50 in the illustrated embodiment includes a lower portion comprising a rectangular plug 52 and an upper portion comprising a pin or rod 54. In use, the plug 52 of a block-connecting element is inserted into a pocket 28 and the pin 54 is inserted into an alignment channel 26 of an overlaying face block. As shown, the pin 54 is offset toward one end of the plug 52 to accommodate vertical walls and setback walls. If a vertical wall is desired, the block-connecting elements 50 are inserted into respective pockets 28 in a "forward" direction (as depicted by block-connecting element 50 in FIG. 2) so that the pins 54 are closer to the front surface of the face block 12. If a setback wall is desired, the block-connecting elements are inserted into respective pockets 28 in a "reversed" direction (as depicted by block-connecting element ~~50'~~ 51 in FIG. 2) so that the pins are closer to the rear surface of the face block 12.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 15, line 1, with the following rewritten paragraph:

Each course 302a-302c comprises a row of block assemblies 10 placed side-by-side with respect to each other so that their trunk blocks 16 are generally parallel and the face blocks 12 are positioned side-by-side in a continuous line. Thus, a pair of adjacent assemblies defines a generally rectangular chamber 38 suitable for filling with a suitable backfill material (desirably aggregate) to provide stability and drainage. Each chamber 38 is defined at its sides by the trunk blocks 16 of the respective assemblies 10 and at its front and rear by the face blocks 12 and tail blocks ~~16~~ 18 of the respective assemblies.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 16, line 11, with the following rewritten paragraph:

As shown in FIG. 1, each block assembly 10 has a depth D defined between the front surface 14 of the front block 12 and the rear surface of the tail block 18. For additional anchoring stability in a wall, particularly in the lower layers of walls having several layers, the depths of the assemblies 10 may be extended in the rearward direction by attaching one or more extension assemblies 40 (FIG. 6). As shown in FIG. 6, each extension assembly 40 includes a tail block ~~18'~~ 19 attached perpendicularly to a trunk block ~~16'~~ 17 in a T-shaped arrangement as in a standard assembly 10. In each extension assembly 40, the trunk block ~~16'~~ 17 attaches to and extends perpendicularly from the center of the tail block 18 of the standard assembly 10.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 19, line 7, with the following rewritten paragraph:

FIG. 7 illustrates the placement of a tie-back sheet ~~106~~ 108 used to stabilize courses of blocks 60. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 7, the front edge of the tie-back sheet 108 is positioned behind block-connecting elements 50 and extends rearwardly into the fill material (not shown in FIG. 7) retained behind the wall, as previously described.